

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A propeller shaft assembly comprising:

a tubular member having an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter and an inner surface defined by an invariable inside diameter; and

a tubular support member disposed within the tubular member and having an inner surface defined by an invariable inside diameter, the inner surface forming a cylindrical, empty cavity within the tubular member, and an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter, the outer surface engaging the inner surface of the tubular member to increase a bending frequency of the propeller shaft assembly.

2. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said tubular support member comprises an open-cell foam impregnated with a resin or cement.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said tubular support member includes a plurality of openings formed along its length (L1) for reducing the weight of the tubular support member.
5. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 2 wherein said open-cell foam is generally flexible before being impregnated with the resin or cement.
6. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said tubular member comprises metal or reinforced plastic.
7. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said tubular member has a length (L2) greater than a length (L1) of said tubular support member.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A torque transmission shaft comprising:

a metal tube having an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter and an inner surface defined by an invariable uniform inside diameter; and

a tubular support member co-axially located within said metal tube and having an inner surface defined by an invariable inside diameter, the inner surface forming a cylindrical empty cavity within said metal tube, and an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter, the outer surface engaging ~~an interior~~ the inner surface of said metal tube, said tubular support member comprising a rigid foamed plastic extending along a length of said metal tube.

10. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein the support member has a first length (L1) and said tube has a second length (L2) and the ratio L1/L2 is less than 1.0.

11. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein the support member includes a plurality of openings formed along a first length (L1) for reducing the weight of the support member.

12. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein said support member comprises an open-cell foamed plastic impregnated with a resin or cement.

13. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 12 wherein said open-cell foamed plastic is generally flexible before being impregnated with the resin or cement.

14. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a rigid torque transmission shaft comprising:

providing a metal or reinforced plastic tube having an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter and an inner surface defined by an invariable inside diameter; and

introducing a tubular support member co-axially within said tube, said tubular support member having an inner surface defined by an invariable inside diameter, the inner surface

forming a cylindrical, empty cavity within said tube, and an outer surface defined by an invariable outside diameter to engage an interior surface of said tube, said support member comprising a rigid foam plastic extending along a length of the tubular member.

15-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein said tubular member has a thickness generally less than 8 mm.

21. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the outer diameter of the tubular member is generally greater than 40 mm and is generally less than 300 mm.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein the support member has a first length (L1) and said tube has a second length (L2) and the ratio L1/L2 is greater than 0.25.

24. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 further comprising a connecting member fixed to each end of the tubular member.

25. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the outside diameter of the tubular support member is greater than or equal to the inside diameter of the tubular member such that the tubular support member engages the tubular member via interference fit.

26. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 7 wherein the ratio L1/L2 is not less than 0.25 and not greater than 1.0.

27. (Previously Presented) An assembly according to claim 1 wherein the tubular support member has a generally uniform thickness along its length.

28. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 further comprising a joint element or stub shaft fixed to each end of said metal tube.

29. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein the outside diameter of the tubular support member is greater than or equal to the inside diameter of

the tubular member such that the tubular support member engages the tubular member via interference fit.

30. (Previously Presented) A torque transmission shaft according to claim 9 wherein the tubular support member has a generally uniform thickness along its length.

31. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a torque transmission shaft according to claim 14 wherein the outside diameter of the tubular support member is greater than or equal to the inside diameter of the tubular member such that the tubular support member is introduced via interference fit.

32. (Withdrawn) A method of producing a torque transmission shaft according to claim 14 wherein the tubular support member has a generally uniform thickness along its length.